

Human Services Value Curve – a framework to understand that opportunities, challenges and capabilities needed to deliver the ACT Government Human Services Reform Agenda¹

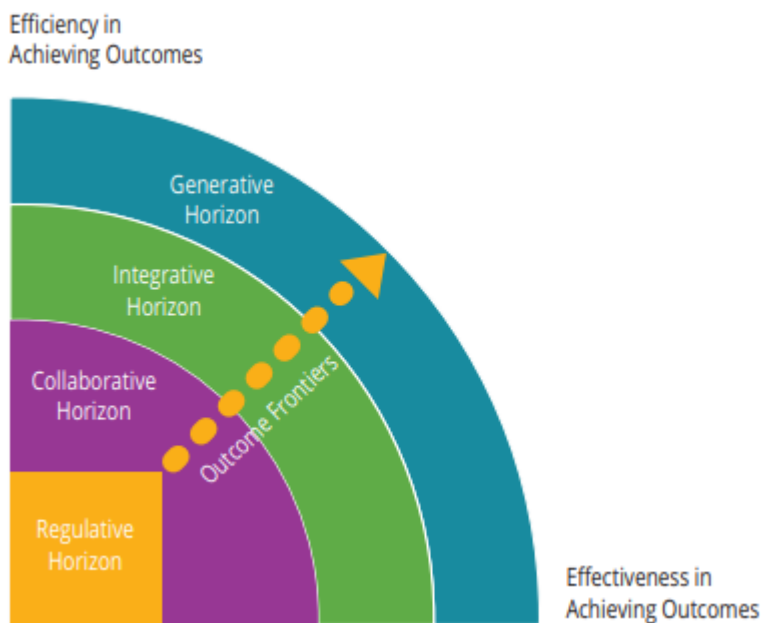
[HSVC_Guide.pdf \(lnwprogram.org\)](#)

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INTRODUCTION

The Human Services Value Curve is a theory of change and leadership framework to help you envision and design the organizational and systemic capacity to deliver transformational solutions for individuals, families, and communities... [It has been created because] advancing equity in health and social and economic mobility is the most pressing challenge of our time. Equity in the hope and realization of building a better life helps hold the social fabric of communities together.

The Human Services Value Curve charts organisation/system growth in four horizons, each of which represent a progressive level of outcomes, impact, and social value.



The horizons are described in brief as:

- **REGULATIVE HORIZON:** The focus of is on supporting and helping people and families in critical need via an organization that can deliver customer-friendly and cost-effective programs that adhere to evidence-based policy and program rules, processes, and regulations.

This is the approach that is sought and enabled through the current funding and procurement models in ACT Government human service partnerships with NGOs

¹ Material in normal font is excerpts from the document in the link above. Material in Italics assesses the implementation of Human Services System reforms in the ACT within this framework or provides additional comments/analysis.

- COLLABORATIVE HORIZON: The focus is on helping people and families gain stability via multiple organizations that collaborate across programmatic and organizational boundaries to deliver an optimally tailored mix of services to the customer.

This is the approach sought by many Program Managers and is the aspiration of many NGO services, however the current approach to Commissioning (multiple funding streams being procured at the same time which creates a competitive tension, and no integration of theories of change, procurement processes or funding flows across multiple streams of funding) has not created the right incentives or opportunities for collaborative and integrative approaches.

- INTEGRATIVE HORIZON: The focus is on achieving sustainable social and economic mobility for people and families via an integrated system of services that co-create novel services and solutions that address the root causes of challenges and opportunities.

The Wellbeing Framework is founded on a commitment to integrating economic and social objectives and co-delivering on these through policy and investment cycles. However, the human services reform agenda is not integrated with the economic development agenda of ACT Government, so social and economic mobility objectives are not equally valued across economic and social policy decision-makers in Government, economic policy and municipal service officials are not involved in discovery and strategise phases of Human Services Commissioning, and there is no cross co-ordination of planning by human services portfolios during design, invest and integrate phases of commissioning.

- GENERATIVE HORIZON: The focus is on generating equitably flourishing communities via an ecosystem of organizations, machines, and services that seamlessly design and deliver solutions for multi-dimensional socioeconomic and population-level challenges and opportunities.

The Commissioning RoadMap aspires to deliver this eco-system wide approach but the commentary in the sections above illustrates why it is not able to deliver at this time.

The Community Sector Reform initiatives in 2012-2015, the Industry Strategy 2016-2026 and the Sector Sustainability Program 2023-2028 have all included relevant objectives and activities to build system capability to progress through the Value Curve, and have contributed to progress in some areas (see notes in section below titled System Capacity Building Domains and Summary of ACT Activity).

However, the depth of transformation required in governance and structures, data systems and evidence generation, service design and solution seeking, workforce capability and cultures has not been resourced. ACT NGO and Gov partners have faced many barriers and disruptions to investing in the transformations needed, and the Starvation Cycle constrains capacity to make the shifts needed (see notes in section below titled Operationalising Each level of the Value Curve).

SYSTEM CAPACITY BUILDING DOMAINS AND SUMMARY OF ACT ACTIVITY

In traversing the Human Services Value Curve, there are four Advancement Levers that bring dynamic capacity at each horizon. The Advancement Levers are described in brief [*and the previous and current activities in ACT to exercise these levers in the human services system are outlined in italics*]:

· **GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURES:** This lever represents the connection between a human services organization's outcomes focus and its design. It includes the blueprint for how resources are organized and allocated, and in particular, the supporting structures, systems, and processes necessary to facilitate interactions between organizations, services, and constituents.

Recommendation from Industry Strategy 2026-2026:

Common ICT infrastructure and quality systems *There is the potential for an Industry Strategy to support the development of common ICT Frameworks, and approaches to data collection, consent and management are key, as well as quality and service costing systems to reduce duplication and improve efficiency across the sector. This could include larger organisations sharing their capabilities and resources with smaller organisations.*

Costing Tools and Resources development included in SSP activities

Cross sector collaboration should also be encouraged under the Industry Strategy and community services working in the health sector in particular have experience in the development of service costing models and frameworks which could be shared and applied more broadly across the sector. - Costing Tools and Resources development included in SSP activities

Enhancing governance and leadership

As the pace of change continues, and recognising the need for community services to become more business-like in their approach, there is the opportunity for organisations to work together to improve governance across the sector under the Industry Strategy.

Boards play a vital role in supporting the Community Services Industry and many comprise volunteers who give up their time to support their local community services provider. To enhance Board skills and capabilities, cross industry tools and resources could be developed to assist Boards and organisations to enhance their strategic planning, financial management and overall corporate governance capabilities. -

Material developed in 2018-2019 here: [Emerging Leaders' Framework - May 2019 - ACTCOSS](#) , [Resource: Legislative Compliance Checklist - ACTCOSS](#) , [OIK - Governance and Strategic Leadership - ACTCOSS](#)

Peak bodies play an important role in citizen engagement and in promoting the interests of community service providers as well as service users and the broader community. The role of the various peak bodies operating in the Community Services Industry should also be leveraged to support collective work on organisational leadership and cross agency collaboration. - New Peak Body funding Grants of 5 years in place in 2022-2023 - these enable longer term planning and KPIs are focused on outcomes not outputs

· **INSIGHT & EVIDENCE:** This lever sets how a human services organization understands and responds to information on individual, family, and community-wide needs for services and solutions. In addition, this lever represents data-led evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of services in order to inform policy, capacity, and overall service transformation.

Recommendation from Industry Strategy 2016-2026:

Research, planning and evaluation – Ind Strat Report in 2019 said: Develop an Evaluation Framework (Aug 2018 – Dec 2018) *The framework will be designed*

to measure progress towards the outcomes of the ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026. Initial expenditure \$67, 000 , Insight Consulting

The lack of a strong evidence base and a proper focus on evaluation is seen as a major impediment to the Community Services Industry demonstrating its worth and better meeting client and community needs. A collective research, planning and evaluation agenda with designated research priorities would help build the evidence base about what works to best address social disadvantage and support improved outcomes measurement across the industry. Research priorities would need to be identified and agreed by the community sector representatives.

Community needs assessment

The need to provide integrated services to meet a community's needs and look at place-based approaches is well recognised. However, more work is required to understand exactly what the needs of particular communities are and what types of services are required to meet those needs. The Industry Strategy provides the vehicle for organisations to come together to undertake in depth community needs assessment targeting particular communities which would take into account demographic characteristics including levels of disadvantage and the current availability and distribution of services. Direct community input needs to be built into the needs assessment process including through client surveys and community forums.

Outcomes measurement framework – Wellbeing Framework starts this process and further development included in SSP data project

There is a wealth of data collected by community service organisations on the services they provide. However, the focus has primarily been on service outputs rather than the outcomes being achieved. Industry should work together to develop an outcomes measurement framework for human services that can be applied across services and which can capture both the tangible and intangible outcomes generated by community services including increased social cohesion and inclusiveness. This could include collecting and pooling data from across organisations to support outcomes measurement in selected priority areas such as homelessness or mental health.

Industry profiling – Done via Counting the Costs/State of the Sector research 2021

The Industry Strategy has highlighted the lack of consistent information and data to accurately profile the Community Services Industry in the ACT. More work on collecting information directly from providers to inform an in-depth industry profile would be useful. An industry survey could be undertaken to gather more detailed information on the state of the Community Services Industry including information on the size, nature of services, clients, staffing levels, revenue and asset base of providers. [83] This could be undertaken on a regular basis to track changes over time.

- SERVICES & SOLUTIONS: This lever captures how a human services organization co-creates and designs solutions with customers and stakeholders in order to optimize outcomes. This lever also charts the policy change and service innovation that improves the capacity and agility to respond to changing community-wide needs with new forms of services and outcomes.

Recommendation from Industry Strategy 2026-2026:

Sector Development and Innovation Fund

An Innovation Fund should be established to encourage a range of industry development and innovation initiatives which will help translate the Industry Strategy into action. The fund could support initiatives which are focussed on:

- supporting the creation of new ways of working and holistic models of care;
- encouraging increased collaboration across the sector;
- involving clients in the planning and design of services; and

- promoting sharing of data and resources across organisations.

Exploring sustainable adaptive models to grow

Government procurement processes are a key factor impacting on the sustainability of the Community Services Industry. A number of industry participants argued for the need for government to provide greater funding certainty by moving towards longer term contracts for community services. Concerns about the impact of recommissioning and tendering processes on small providers were also raised. - **to be implemented via Commissioning Road Map, regular reporting on those programs delivered via longer term funding agreements to commence in 2024**

New approaches to tendering for human services are needed which encourage collaboration amongst providers and promote diversity in the provision of services. – **see notes above on disincentives and barriers to collaborative approaches**

Opportunities to diversify funding sources including through social impact investing should also be explored for the industry as a whole. – **Commonwealth is talking with States and Territories about a fund to support social impact investing, but ACT unlikely to be eligible because focused on applying a place-based approach to reducing entrenched disadvantage**

- PEOPLE & CULTURE: This lever represents the knowledge, capabilities, competencies, and roles individuals and teams need to deliver services and outcomes. In addition, this lever addresses fostering talent in order to develop and sustain a resilient, innovative, and agile environment, along with the cultural dynamics that underpin capacity and performance

Recommendation from Industry Strategy 2026-2026: Workforce strategies

The need for a skilled workforce to meet the growing demand for services and provide more flexible and responsive client centred care has been identified as a major challenge for the industry going forward. Industry should focus on strategies which can support shared training programs and cross skilling of workers including upskilling of volunteers. Strategies aimed at attracting and retaining appropriately qualified staff should also be considered which could include joint marketing campaigns and other resource sharing initiatives. - **ATOD and CYFSP adopted a sector wide approach, other programs do not have this. Industry Strategy workforce initiatives 2018-2019 reported here: [Implementation of the Workforce Plan \(act.gov.au\)](#) Workforce Mapping report produced in 2019: [Workforce Data and Community Needs Analysis - ACTCOSS](#) and Communications Plan progressed via this webpage: [About the ACT Careers Gateway - ACTCSCG \(communitysector.org.au\)](#).**

Continued efforts to ensure that pay and conditions in the sector remain comparable with the public sector more broadly will be needed to ensure the sector does not fall further behind. Reviewing award conditions and associated industrial relations arrangements should also be considered in particular to meet the needs for services to provide more flexible and responsive client centred care. – **Indexation formula uses WPI not CPI for 80% of funding but does not address gap re 3% increase in superannuation over past 10y, ongoing agenda to improve maternity leave and increase superannuation entitlement above minimum**

OPERATIONALISING EACH level of the Value Curve

REGULATIVE HORIZON

At the Regulative level, a human services system and its organizations can provide measures of the inputs and outputs (such as program investment, number of families receiving services, percentage of cases closed in a given time period, etc.) that describe and quantify the activity, efficiency, and basic trends of human services programs over time. Looking forward, leaders can start to build a foundation for more impact by assessing the quality of existing program data and developing a plan to improve data usefulness and data governance in ways that enable better collaboration across organizations and improved outputs.

While proficiency at this horizon is vital for performance and should be sustained, too much reliance on Regulative capabilities will limit an organization's ability to meet more complex customer needs and deliver better social value to communities and stakeholders.

ENABLING PROGRESS TO OTHER LEVELS

Imperatives for moving to other levels – better responding to complexity of need, mitigating risks of disruption in operating environment, availability of improved evidence and technologies, social justice

Moving to other levels on the Value Curve requires innovation that will enhance capacity in one or more of these areas:

- More efficient at delivering outcomes – i.e., they can innovate in order to produce outcomes with a level or reduced amount of resources.
- More effective at attaining outcomes – i.e., they can innovate in order to measurably improve the quality of outcomes.
- Develop entirely new capabilities – i.e., they can innovate in order to deliver previously unattainable outcomes.

Historically, most human services organizations have developed this [innovation] capacity within “silos” – with resources, processes, and systems embedded within an operational unit charged with distributing and tracking inputs and outputs. This has served a good “regulative” purpose, as categorical management facilitated efficiency and accountability. Yet as society's challenges grow more complex, silo-based, single-service, and stand-alone organizational models lack the ability to significantly improve effectiveness and develop the new capabilities better outcomes require.

ADOPTING ECOSYSTEM MINDSET – shared capacity and responsibility, client-centred rather than program-centred design and delivery

To meet the capacity and outcome demands of the future, value will increasingly be generated by health and human services ecosystems – a network of organizations, machines, and services that coproduce new solutions to solve the root causes of individual, family, and community health and human services challenges... For example, an ecosystem that aligns housing, nutrition, mental health, and career planning services will improve the ability of a family to sustainably increase their health and overall social and economic mobility. Entirely new levels of outcomes can be realized.

Of course, organizations have always tried to collaborate and share ideas to do new things. But what's new today is the power of digital business models – the technology, data and analytics, and artificial intelligence that not only blur organizational boundaries, but also enable entirely new forms of services and outcomes to emerge. Emerging examples are illuminating the way forward. In Connecticut, health and human services leaders realized that 75 percent of children were developmentally behind by the time they entered Head

Start². To change this trajectory, officials created an ecosystem that identifies infants at risk and designs interventions for the family with a goal of preventing adverse childhood events.

Whether you are launching, growing, or scaling an ecosystem, the new model runs counter to not only traditional ways we have allocated resources to silo-based domains, but also how we've historically built and led organizations with centralized command and control. As a result, leaders will have to navigate the design of new governance and structures, innovation in services and solutions, adoption of insights and evidence from data, and changes to the workforce and culture.

SOCIAL PROGRESS NOT MARKET GROWTH

In the market economy, broadly speaking, **success for private sector ecosystems is dependent on growth of customers** (building features that increase customer dependency on the ecosystem), services, and resulting throughput to revenue. In the political economy of **public and social sector organizations, success will be measured in outcomes that move customers to sustainable self-sufficiency (building features and services that decrease customer dependency on the ecosystem), health, and well-being.** So, while the underlying technological mechanisms (digital platforms, analytics, etc.) of ecosystems are quite the same, the end goal is substantially different.

MOVING TOWARDS THE COLLABORATIVE HORIZON

As a human services organization progresses to the Collaborative Horizon, policy and practice moves to a **person-centric model and whole-family mindset and model**, in which services are combined **to improve the stability of an individual or family...** [this approach] requires expanding beyond service and program “silos” and categorical management and coordinating with other operational units, departments, organizations, and sectors to align and co-deliver a mix of services. This level of coordination and collaboration **creates a platform for two-generation family solutions**, as well as **enables capacity growth through improved information sharing and streamlining of common customer information and referral, intake, eligibility, case management, and supporting technologies and infrastructure.**

Shifts in approach:

- formal mechanisms to increase cross-boundary decision-making
- blending and braiding of resources to facilitate cross-program service delivery
- structures, systems, and processes to facilitate communication and interactions between organizations and services
- measurement of outcomes that describe results across programs
- adoption of systems, technologies, and case-management tools that enable better consumer navigation, communication, information sharing, and decision-making across programs and organizations
- experimentation with new service models

² Head Start programs support children's growth from birth to age 5 through services centered around early learning and development, health, and family well-being. Head Start staff actively engage parents, recognizing family participation throughout the program as key to strong child outcomes. Head Start services are available at no cost to children ages birth to 5 in eligible families. Head Start preschool services work with children ages 3 to 5 and their families. Early Head Start services work with families that have children ages birth to 3, and many also serve expectant families. [Head Start Services | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/children-and-family-services/)

- development of workforce relational and collaborative skills that make cross-organization innovation and co-creation a norm
- Adoption of information collection and analysis to improve performance and social value:
 - understand community-wide needs for services and solutions.
 - analyzing ecosystem-wide data (sourced from organizations, services, sensors, and machines) and using artificial intelligence to become predictive and prescriptive
 - inform policymaking
 - learning how services and solutions can solve the root cause of health and human services challenges

The expected return on investment in making these shifts in approach is the improved capacity to identify new opportunities to improve the client experience, reduce costs, enable population health management, enhance care, and increase equity in outcomes

MOVING TOWARDS THE INTEGRATIVE HORIZON

Advancement is based on achieving sustainable social and economic mobility for individuals and families by helping them solve and overcome the root causes of challenges.

Shifts in approach:

- strategic goal is whole-person and family-centric service design
- intentional focus on applying social determinants of health to harmonize and customize services for customers
- capability to use digital platforms and information technologies that enable the seamless integration of multiple programs and services across organizational and sectoral boundaries
- formal cross program/cross organisation agreements on policy, investment, infrastructure, service delivery, information sharing, and outcomes valuation
- integrated, single-view system for case management and outcome tracking
- ability to run consumer and community level rapid-cycle assessment and analytics to offer prediction of client needs and inform policy, practice, and system re-design
- capacity and agility to respond to changing customer and community needs with new forms of services and outcomes developed through co-production (involving client, service, funder)
- workforce have deep skillsets in co-innovation and partnerships, active problem-solving, shared critical thinking approaches, and an ethos of customer-centered empowerment

The expected return on investment in making these shifts is improved visibility of what will amplify efficiency and effectiveness in outcomes, improved client co-creation and sustainable engagement, reorientation of activity to individualized client services focused on self-sufficiency, improved health and safety outcomes, and social inclusion.

Barriers to adopting this approach:

Appetite, readiness and authorisation to invest in a long term transformational change

When a human services system and its workers are grappling with adopting a new business model, new technologies and new processes, two forms of innovation happen simultaneously - technical innovation and organizational innovation:

- **TECHNICAL INNOVATION:** This form of change is what we're most used to. Organizations and people experience this when implementing incremental change (such

as updating a process, technology or management method) within their current organizational structure, authority lines and knowledge set.

· ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION: This form of change is where most people and institutions get uncomfortable, as it requires the development and adoption of new competencies and capabilities – often within a new environment, governance structure and organizational design

Combine these two dimensions and you have an “adaptive challenge” ...[that] requires experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization. Without ... changing attitudes, values and behaviours – people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment.

transformational change cannot be effected completely through authority or (change) management. Rather, it takes a person (or set of complimentary-acting people) to actively mobilize stakeholders to address real and perceived loss of important ideals, values and competencies that have been in place for years while also actively learning new competencies, capabilities and culture.

MOVING TOWARDS THE GENERATIVE HORIZON

health and human services expand to address multi-dimensional community-wide challenges and opportunities...social value is maximized by intentionally building equity for all people into the attributes of wellbeing, such as health, social capital and resilience, safety, dignity, and economic security and mobility. *[note how closely these attributes align with the ACT Wellbeing Framework Domains]*

For this approach to be adopted, people and organisations (NGO and Gov) need to have already experienced deep integration of services

Shifts in approach:

- linking of policy and investment that enable ecosystem-based solutions
- Governance is intentionally adaptive and able to dynamically meet changing community health and human services outcome needs
- a network of organizations, machines, and services that co-design and seamlessly deliver solutions to address and solve the root causes of individual, family, and community health and human services challenges.
- [Alignment of] policy and practice that affect advancement and discovery of novel solutions based on social determinants of health
- collaboration and integration with [policy and activity in] domains such as public safety, housing, education, and workforce development
- rapid-cycle evaluation
- Service ecosystem is adaptive and modular, allowing an array of service providers to build, share, and deploy information and services on a real-time basis
- Impact measures are transparently communicated and enable community-wide engagement and enable cumulative assessment of impact
- use of population data and insights to not only work upstream – by addressing key drivers of community wellness, but also become predictive and prescriptive – by synthesizing trends and co-designing policy, value-based practice models, and real-time innovation in response to community conditions.